

# **VHA Comprehensive Mental Health Strategic Plan**

November 2004

# Why Mental Health Care Strategic Planning?

- Growing veteran population with unmet mental health care needs
- National Mental Health Emphasis
  - President's Freedom Commission on Mental Health
  - Secretary's Mental Health Task Force June 04
  - Committee on Care of Veterans with Serious Mental Illness
  - CARES

# President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health Goals

- Americans understand that mental health is essential to overall health
- Mental health care is consumer and family driven
- Disparities in mental health services are eliminated
- Early mental health screening, assessment and referrals to services are common practice
- Excellent mental health care is delivered and research is accelerated
- Technology is used to access mental health care

# Secretary's Task Force on Mental Health Findings

- Variability and gaps in mental health care
- A reduction in substance abuse treatment programs
- Need for a national mental health plan
- Need for more improvements in mental health leadership

# Comprehensive VHA Mental Health Care Strategic Plan Principles

- Reduce stigma
- Promote recovery
- Ensure equal access and reduce variability of care
- Provide culturally competent care to veterans of all ages, races, ethnic groups and genders
- Be veteran and family centered
- Ensure collaborative care models are used in primary care team structure
- Promote research programs based on recovery
- Employ evidence-based population approaches

# Comprehensive VHA Mental Health Care Strategic Plan Workgroups

- Women's mental health issues
- PTSD
- Seriously mentally ill
- Homelessness
- VA/DoD transition issues
- Psychiatric/Geriatric issues
- Substance abuse
- General psychiatry issues
- Medical/Surgical Comorbidities

# Comprehensive VHA Mental Health Care Strategic Plan Emphases

- Aging veterans and long-term care
- Substance abuse treatment programs
- Domiciliaries
- Recover focus
- Homelessness
- Mental health services at CBOCs
- OIF/OEF veteran mental health needs
- Geographic disparities in services
- Needs of veterans of all ages, races, ethnic groups and genders

# Comprehensive VHA Mental Health Care Strategic Plan Recommendations

- Emphasize recovery model at every point of care
- Restore substance abuse programs
- Address long-term care needs
- Integrate veterans and their families into all aspects of program and treatment planning



# Global War on Terrorism

## VA Mental Health Response

- War-Wounded satellite and VHI (4/03)
- Iraq War Mental Health Guide (5/04)
- WMD Mental Health Curriculum (5/04)
- PTSD CPG (04)

# Caring for War Wounded Satellite Broadcast

- Joint VA/DoD effort
- Injuries from conventional and NBC weapons
- Mental health issues including PTSD, deployment-related stress and post-deployment readjustment issues

# Iraq War Guide

- By VA's National Center for PTSD
- Assessment & treatment of PTSD and other war-related mental disorders
- Traumatic grief as a mental health issue

# WMD Curriculum

- PL 107-287 required VA to respond to domestic WMD casualties
- Focus on blast, NBC and mental health issues including acute stress response protocols
- Follows PTSD CPG approaches for disaster response

# PTSD Clinical Practice Guideline

- VA/DoD collaboration, with VA's
  - National Center for PTSD
  - Readjustment Counseling Service (Vet Centers)
- Focus on
  - Acute PTSD
  - PTSD assess/care/referral in primary care
  - Psychotherapy EBP
  - Pharmacotherapy EBP

# VA OIF/OEF Health Care Utilization Analysis: Mental Health

- 194,686 Separated OIF/OEF veterans
- 30,295 (15.6%) received VA health care
- 6,290 with any mental health diagnosis (20.8%)
- 1,824 PTSD (6.0%)
- 169 ASD (0.6%)
- 1,803 Depression (6.0%)
- 944 Affective psychosis (3.1%)
- 2,595 Substance abuse (8.6%)
- 6,000 Additional veterans at Vet Centers ~ 80% with PTSD issues

# New VA Mental Health Research & Clinical Centers (MIRECCs)

- VHA has 10 MIRECCs
- Themes include mental health treatment; substance abuse; schizophrenia; post-deployment mental illnesses; genetics & neurobiology of schizophrenia, PTSD and dementia; and treatment of Alzheimer's and psychosis
- Two new MIRECCs this year
  - Durham NC: Focus on OIF/OEF veterans mental health
  - Denver CO: Focus on suicide prevention